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Mary Bauermeister, *Ich hänge im Triolengitter: mein Leben mit Karlheinz Stockhausen* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 2011), ISBN 978-3-570-58024-0

The enigmatically titled *Ich hänge im Triolengitter* begins with the following lines:

At the very heart of Karlheinz Stockhausen's music is pain and redemptive love. It was a matter of concern for me to exorcize these two poles on paper so that they could be vicariously felt, witnessed, suffered, and liberated. I hope to illuminate the humanity in him, and the powers that moved him again and again to give everything he had to making music. Stockhausen was very near to me while I was writing this book. Sometimes I thought he dictated to me. Thoughts and feelings that I didn't even have at the time of my experiences came to me all at once. It was as if he wanted to suggest: 'Try to see what it feels like from my perspective!' (9)

This mostly sympathetic memoir, written by one of Stockhausen's closest personal and artistic collaborators during a fertile artistic period for both, provides a new glimpse into the life of one of the twentieth century's most creative and productive minds. Bauermeister, whose work was known on both sides of the Atlantic,¹ has opened another window on the personal conflicts and challenges of a composer who attracted an impressive array of detractors and advocates over his sixty-year career. Ultimately what emerges is a series of anecdotes which, though often centring as much on her own experiences as his, provide an additional and interesting perspective on their lives together.

What does 'Ich hänge im Triolengitter' mean? While Stockhausen was working on *Momente* at Baron Agnello's decrepit Sicilian palazzo in 1962, he apparently woke up from a dream and exclaimed these words 'almost as a cry for help' (83). On the one hand being 'trapped in a grid of triplets' could refer to the sheer number of notes that went into the composition of *Momente*: the 'Gitter' in this reading is interpreted as connoting a musical staff. On the other hand it could betray the bottled-up stress that the composer experienced as he tried to negotiate living in a morally troubling *ménage à trois*. Later Bauermeister reflexively suggests that she too might have felt as if 'hanging in a cage of three', another plausible interpretation. She briefly contemplates suicide before deciding instead that it would be better to cook breakfast for Karlheinz and Doris Stockhausen, who had spent the night together in the next room (100–01). Given the sometimes lurid details of their mutually interdependent relationships, which Bauermeister seems to take no pains to hide, it is surprising that the arrangement among these three people held as long as it did, and that such valuable work was created during their years together.

¹ Reinhard Spieler and Kerstin Skrobanek (eds), *Mary Bauermeister: Welten in der Schachtel/Worlds in a Box*, trans. Judith Rosenthal. Exhibition Catalogue, Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen am Rhein (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2010).

A fair amount of what Bauermeister writes about has already been known for some time. While Karl H. Wörner's biography mentions her briefly,² Michael Kurtz devotes considerably more space to her. In addition to recognizing the importance in the Cologne artistic scene of her much-celebrated Lintgasse studio, he also writes knowledgeably about Bauermeister's involvement in the creation of *Originale*, *Momente*, *Plus-Minus*, and other works.³ While Kurtz had the advantage of being able to consult Gabriele Lueg's brief 1986 interview with Bauermeister⁴ in addition to his own conversations with the artist, his chronology ends around 1991, when the composer was working on the opera *Dienstag*, from the epic seven-opera cycle *Licht*. By this time Bauermeister had mostly withdrawn to the background in Stockhausen's life, which took yet another unexpected and very productive direction after their separation.

Kurtz writes: 'In January 1961 a relationship developed between Stockhausen and Mary Bauermeister.'⁵ While there is nothing in her memoir to contest this, it is clear that the two knew of each other as early as 1957.⁶ Stockhausen was already making advances towards Bauermeister in 1958. The next year she travelled to Berlin with Cornelius Cardew to hear a performance of *Refrain*. Both Bauermeister and Cardew went to great lengths to make the trip. They didn't have enough money for food, and pretended not to be hungry when they later sat down at the table with the musicians (18). Once the Bauermeister–Stockhausen relationship had bloomed in early 1961, it was not long before it yielded artistic fruit: their well-known Finland excursion that summer resulted in their first collaboration, *Originale*.

The circumstances behind the creation of *Originale* are well documented. The piece, a kind of neo-Dada gross-out music theatre with parts of *Kontakte* threaded into the action, arose from two weeks of collaborative work at the summer house of Erik Tawaststjerna in Finland. Performances, which involved the outrageously quirky personality of Nam June Paik (in addition to 'real people', such as a newspaper salesman and an animal handler), moved to Bauermeister's quarters after the city withdrew its financial subsidy. Bauermeister writes:

Although I had conceived of the work *Originale* with [Stockhausen], this was not clear from the public's eye. I was only one of the eighteen 'originals', Stockhausen was the composer, and it appeared to be his piece. (91)

Bauermeister seems not to have harboured any bitterness towards Stockhausen for *Originale*'s attribution, as some of Stockhausen's collaborators on other works did, or as did performers

2 Karl H. Wörner, *Stockhausen: Life and Work*, trans. Bill Hopkins (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 242–3.

3 Michael Kurtz, *Stockhausen: a Biography*, trans. Richard Toop (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 110 ff.

4 Gabriele Lueg, 'Gespräch mit Mary Bauermeister', in *Die 60er Jahre: Kölns Weg zur Kunstmetropole, vom Happening zum Kunstmarkt*, ed. Wulf Herzogenrath and Gabriele Lueg (Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1986), 142–5.

5 Kurtz, *Stockhausen*, 111.

6 Regarding Stockhausen's early years, there is plenty of information available for English speakers in the two aforementioned biographies, as well as in Christoph von Blumröder, 'Orientation to Hermann Hesse', trans. Jerome Kohl, *Perspectives of New Music* 36/1 (1998), 65–96, and Richard Toop, 'Messiaen/Goeyvaerts, Fano/Stockhausen, Boulez', *Perspectives of New Music* 13/1 (1974), 141–69.

at the later 1970 Osaka exhibition; indeed, the couple appears to have enjoyed a relatively harmonious artistic collaboration. One of the most entertaining chapters of the memoir concerns the revival of *Originale* in New York City in summer 1964, which Bauermeister played a pivotal role in producing, since Stockhausen remained in Europe. Unlike the passive sabotage exercised by the Cologne authorities, these performances met with active opposition. George Maciunas and his group Action Against Cultural Imperialism (AACI) attempted, without much success, to derail the run by using various methods that became increasingly vicious. Understandably Bauermeister paints the opposition to *Originale* without much sympathy and revels in her crew's careful preparations, which thwarted most of Maciunas's pranks.

Between the sometimes tiresome narratives that are spun around her experiences with her husband, Bauermeister occasionally proposes a new idea relating to the inspiration behind a Stockhausen composition. More than one writer has suggested that the famous opening of *Klavierstück IX*, in which the performer repeats a single tetrachord for several minutes, derives from Stockhausen's assimilation of La Monte Young's idea of the drone into his own serial style.⁷ Bauermeister's alternative explanation (and the alternatives are perhaps not mutually exclusive) was that she inspired Stockhausen by her own pianistic explorations. As she explains the 'secret' meaning behind the M, K, and D moments in *Momente*, Bauermeister writes:

We had already profoundly inspired each other; this happened for the first time in *Klavierstück IX*. The monotony of the chord, repeated 136 times, was due to Stockhausen's eavesdropping on my piano playing [...]. Perhaps as a result of my interest in non-European music I played and repeated one chord on the piano, creating small variations by changing the amount of pressure on the keys with my fingers. One could hear a kind of micromelody thanks to the variation in loudness of the chord's constituent tones. At the time Stockhausen was excited by my experiments on the piano and worked these ideas out in *Klavierstück IX*. (81)

Soon thereafter Bauermeister makes another noteworthy observation, suggesting that Stockhausen's conceptualization of moment form might be related to Young's idea of 'eternal music': both can 'overcome the concept of duration' (123). This is an interesting idea which ought to be explored more thoroughly, especially given the essential cyclic nature of many Stockhausen works such as *Zyklus*, *Tierkreis*, *Sirius*, and *Licht*.

As Leopoldo Siano has remarked, Bauermeister's influence on Stockhausen and her understanding of his techniques often extended to the conceptual level of the composer's work.⁸ Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in her narration of the composition *Mikrophonie I*. During the drive home after her joint Amsterdam exhibition with Stockhausen in summer 1962 Bauermeister bought a number of old lenses from wristwatches at an antique store

7 Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 89; Cornelius Cardew, 'One Sound: La Monte Young', *Musical Times* 107 (1966), 959–60 (p. 959).

8 Leopoldo Siano, 'Mary Bauermeister and Karlheinz Stockhausen: between Music and Visual Art in the Sixties', lecture delivered at the 2011 Stockhausen Courses in Kürten, Germany, forthcoming from the Stockhausen Verlag.

(78). These eventually gave her the idea of creating her famous ‘lens boxes’, which were exhibited in Bonino’s gallery in New York City in 1965.⁹ The technique of distorting natural structures by sliding lenses in front of them could be transferred to music by using microphones, which ‘magnify’ sound in an analoguous way (146). But Stockhausen was willing to take the idea one step further: whereas Bauermeister’s lens boxes distort a *static* ‘background’, in her case a drawing, Stockhausen’s microphones transform an *active* soundworld that is constantly in a state of flux. Moreover, the way in which the sounds are distorted – by performers moving microphones around and by applying various filters to the sounds before they are sent out to loudspeakers – also points to a more sophisticated technique.

Another insight into Stockhausen’s method of composition comes on the other side of the Atlantic, at a house in northern New Jersey in 1965:

I had moved to a room in the house of my friend Hala in Glen Ridge, New Jersey. She let me use a table in her studio space. Stockhausen spent some weeks during his [American] visit in Hala’s house. [...] One day during this time a page of the score to *Mikrophonie II* flew out of the work room and couldn’t be found. Karlheinz was frantic: he interpreted the incident as a bad omen. In any event, he was relieved that it was not a primary sketch for the structure, but rather only a supplemental notation. He complained, ‘Now I have to put myself again in an inspirational mindset. I can’t allow myself to recall what I notated on the pages; I have to act as if I had forgotten it.’ Here he exhibited his typical methods: first of all he created templates, scaffolding, and schemas which he carefully focused on, and then when he executed these in more detail, he opened himself up to musical insertions, to the inner hearing. Often, when he really struggled with a composition, he asked me, ‘What does the piece want with me?’ (169–70)

Bauermeister narrates their 1966 trip to Japan in vibrant detail, and though the reminiscence sometimes reads like a travel log, there is still enough of interest to hold one’s attention. While the official invitation overseas was to create a work to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), for which Stockhausen composed *Telemusik*, Bauermeister’s chronicle focuses on Stockhausen’s experiences ‘off the clock’, namely their sightseeing adventures. One senses her awe as she describes trips to temples, the encounter with Daisetsu Suzuki, Japanese gardens, the tea ceremony, and Noh theatre. Nowadays it is difficult to capture the sense of surprise and disorientation the couple must have faced encountering such a foreign culture, since such things are now instantly available via YouTube and the Internet. Apart from marking the beginning of his lifelong fascination with Japanese culture, Bauermeister suggests that Stockhausen was influenced in his work *Prozession* by an unforgettable all-night temple ceremony in Nara. Stockhausen was to visit Japan on many future occasions, and several later works, including *Jahreslauf*, which became the first act of his opera *Dienstag*, can be traced to his fascination with Japanese culture.

9 Spieler and Skrobanek (eds), *Mary Bauermeister: Welten in der Schachtel*, 70.

One enjoyable chapter in the memoir is devoted to a series of visits that Stockhausen and Bauermeister made to various other artist couples. While they knew many New York artists such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg from their time in the United States, they also met (often together with their spouses) Joan Miró, Max Ernst, Henry-Louis de La Grange, Marguerite Maeght, André Masson, and others during travels in 1969. Stockhausen's connection to the contemporary art scene through Bauermeister is easily overlooked, and future writers would do well to keep in mind the extent to which Stockhausen was steeped in it. Stockhausen's varied and fanciful covers for his CD series, released by his own publishing house, attest to his own artistic interests.

The 1970 Osaka exhibition in Bornemann's spherical auditorium marked a pinnacle in Stockhausen's career up to that point. It was during these gruelling daily performances that the fault lines between Stockhausen and his collaborators became increasingly evident. Bauermeister, occupied with her own art show in New York City, could not attend the opening in Osaka but arrived shortly after the performance series began.¹⁰ The couple's subsequent trip to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and their experience of the almost anarchic Kataragama Festival provided the inspiration for another memorable scene in Stockhausen's theatre. According to Bauermeister,

Drumming and other sounds attracted us to a large, open square where a Zen temple stood. There was a mountain of coconuts piled there. One could buy some coconuts for a few rupees and throw them at a large walled-in flagstone. If the coconut split into two equal pieces, the wish directed to the Gods would be fulfilled. Eager workers collected the broken shells. The coconut fruit was used to make candles, and the shells were used by the monks for drinking out of, for spices, or for making offerings.
(261)

At the end of *Luzifers Abschied* (1982) the chorus, dressed as monks, process out of the cathedral in which the main performance is supposed to take place, and throw coconuts against a slab of stone.¹¹ The connection here is obvious, but the association with Lucifer (the protagonist of *Samstag aus Licht*) remains more opaque. Did the disorganized festival leave a darker impression on Stockhausen?

The influence of the *Urantia Book* on Stockhausen's *Licht* cycle has been a continuing source of interest among musicologists and theologians.¹² Bauermeister's memoir provides a little nuance to our understanding of Stockhausen's encounter with it. The unusual

10 Stockhausen's meticulous schedule for the performances can be found in Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zur Musik*, vol. 3: 1963–1970, ed. Dieter Schnebel (Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1971), 177–81.

11 Stockhausen, *Texte zur Musik*, vol. 5: *Komposition: 1977–1984*, ed. Christoph von Blumröder (Cologne: DuMont, 1989), 643.

12 Markus Bandur, "... alles aus einem Kern entfaltet, thematisch und strukturell": Karlheinz Stockhausen und die Rezeption des *Urantia Buch* in LICHT, in *Internationales Stockhausen-Symposium 2000: LICHT*, ed. Imke Misch and Christoph von Blumröder (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004), 136–46.

circumstances of his coming into contact with the book match, for the most part, those revealed in Markus Bandur's essay, but Bauermeister suggests a concrete reason why the composer hesitated to read it sooner. Stockhausen was 'suspicious of' the 'sinister' man in sandals who carried a prophet's staff and a copy of the book; he looked 'as if he had come right out of the Old Testament' (291). Of course Stockhausen later read considerable parts of the book, and even said once, 'What I've read of it, I think it's true'.¹³ At any rate, Bauermeister did not show much interest in it: since the trip to Japan and her intense 1967 reading of Sri Aurobindo during the couple's stay in San Francisco she had oriented herself much more strongly towards Buddhism than Karlheinz (209).

One scholar who has reflected on the Bauermeister–Stockhausen relationship concludes that Bauermeister's influence moved Stockhausen away from a kind of Darmstadt intellectualism and towards a more open, erotic vision of art.¹⁴ The merits of this thesis are confirmed by her memoir. But was it solely the influence of Bauermeister that caused Stockhausen to change gears around 1960? Among the many esoteric texts he devoured during his lifetime, one stands out in a striking letter from the composer to Bauermeister dated early 1961, in which he writes that 'in between the letters' of Viktor von Weizsäcker's little book *Gestalt und Zeit* he 'discovers' her face (321–2). Von Weizsäcker's work, heavily influenced by organicist philosophies of the natural world stemming from Goethe, suggests an additional source for the morphological techniques Stockhausen was developing within his serial technique. It is worthwhile considering the idea that a confluence of factors, one of which was Bauermeister's entrance on the stage, led to the change in the early 1960s.

Bauermeister attributes her separation and ultimate divorce from Stockhausen principally to her own desire for more children rather than any serious faults she found in her husband. Although their union was legally dissolved in 1973, Bauermeister stayed in touch with Stockhausen for the rest of his life (her house in Forsbach was only twenty-two kilometres away from his in Kürten). She played a minor but not insignificant role in some of his later works. In addition to her role in designing costumes and sets for *Sirius*, *Harlekin*, and *Licht*, she drew the Michael sign, a blue symbol on a white background containing three concentric circles and four iris bulbs radiating from the centre. Was this a way around having to negotiate with the notoriously protective Urantia foundation, which might have sued at the time if Stockhausen had used the curious symbol described in the book?¹⁵

Bauermeister continued to proofread Stockhausen's scores in his later years. Wörner noted early on that Stockhausen 'has on several occasions asked [Bauermeister] to take on the work of correcting his published scores'.¹⁶ What was the nature of this 'correcting'? Was

13 Christian Ruch, "... but what I've read, I think, it's true": Karlheinz Stockhausen and the *Urantia Book*, lecture delivered at the 2011 Stockhausen Courses in Kürten, Germany, forthcoming from the Stockhausen Verlag.

14 Siano, 'Mary Bauermeister and Karlheinz Stockhausen'.

15 *Urantia Book*, Paper 53.5.4. The very next paragraph describes the Lucifer sign; curiously Stockhausen's Lucifer sign follows it exactly.

16 Wörner, *Stockhausen*, 243.

it restricted to the presentation and layout of graphic elements, or did it extend to modifying or changing the music notation itself? In her memoir Bauermeister provides a striking statement that serves only to deepen this mystery. 'This [correcting] was easy for me since I read scores visually like a picture, instead of musically, so I noticed errors quickly' (283). This seems like an unorthodox yet perfectly reasonable way of proofing the scores, but the devil is in the details. What kinds of corrections did Bauermeister suggest?

This touching and entertaining memoir suggests that the time is nearing for a new Stockhausen biography to be written. Kurtz's now classic work is over twenty years old. Many significant events have occurred since then, not only the completion of *Licht* and the near-completion of the *Klang* cycle but also, since the composer's death, the monumental 2010 performance of *Sonntag aus Licht* in Cologne, the new production of *Mittwoch* by Birmingham City Opera in August 2012, and the gathering of a young generation of bright scholars around Cologne University in the newly organized *Licht-Kreis*.¹⁷ Stockhausen's late works have not yet had a chance to be studied in as much depth as the earlier ones, but they hardly count as 'hippy-dippy', as one widely read American critic has suggested. A central part of Stockhausen's artistic vision was formed during his relationship with Bauermeister, and if one can negotiate some of the more colourful details in her memoir, her narrative is poised to endure as an important story of artistic collaboration in the twentieth century.

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Amy Bauer, *Ligeti's Laments: Nostalgia, Exoticism, and the Absolute* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), ISBN 978-1-4094-0041-7 (hb)

Ligeti continues to be one of the most prominent figures in twentieth-century music: he was honoured widely after his death in 2006, and scholarly interest in his music has since shown no signs of abating. In this recent monograph, Amy Bauer provides close readings and analyses that cover the entire chronological span of Ligeti's output, her breadth as a scholar evident in her thorough assimilation of both the secondary literature on the composer and a wide range of critical theory. She goes some distance towards capturing the truly multifaceted nature of Ligeti's oeuvre, paying attention to pieces that display variously the influences of Eastern European folk music, the abstractions of the mid-century avant-garde, minimalist

¹⁷ *Licht-Kreis*, University of Cologne <<http://licht-kreis.blogspot.com>> (accessed 30 April 2012).